



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

September 14, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Fishermen's Comment Card

Enclosed with this memo, you will find 50 copies of the newly released Fishermen's Comment Card. This Comment Card is to provide the fishing industry with a method to report comments and/or concerns regarding the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. The Comment Card includes survey questions on your performance while setting up and while on the observed trip, and also asks how fishermen would want to obtain copies of their data, and whether they would like more information about the program. The intent of the Comment Card is to solicit and encourage the industry to come forward with feedback about the observer program. Constructive comments will be used to further improve the program, and any identified concerns will be immediately addressed. We hope that this tool will also help to familiarize the fishermen with the program and promote cooperation and involvement with the observer program.

We will compile all the results in a database and a summary will be included in a biennial report (not including any observer, fishermen, or vessel names) available on our website. You would be contacted by the Fisheries Sampling Branch staff if there was concern about your performance to talk about the issue in question. We recognize the possibility that disgruntled fishermen may complain or submit negative comments about the program, so we would follow up on any complaints to gather more information.

You should offer this Comment Card to the vessel operator at the end of every trip. If they refuse it or indicate that they already have one, you do not have to force it on them. It is an optional survey for the fishermen. However, **it is important that it is offered (along with the Data Release Form) at the conclusion of every trip.** There will be other outlets for fishermen to obtain the Comment Card as well, it is available electronically on our website and will be passed out by FSB staff at the docks and at industry meetings and outreach events. You may also request additional Comment Cards if you run out as you would with other needed gear.



If you were to leave the program before using up all your Comment Cards, you would turn those back in along with your other gear. We need to track the return rate of the Comment Cards (i.e. how many are handed out to fishermen, and how many are filled out and returned by fishermen), so please do not discard them. All Comment Card that are issued to you should be distributed to vessel operators or returned to our office.

The Fishermen's Comment Card has been approved under the Paperwork Reduction Act and has been accepted by the Office of Management and Budget. It is printed on waterproof paper that is to be folded and sealed with the attached sticker and includes pre-printed addressing and postage.

If you or fishermen have any questions regarding this memo or the Fishermen's Comment Card, please contact Amy Van Atten at 508-495-2266 or Amy.Van.Atten@noaa.gov. Thank you very much for your cooperation with this project.

Enclosures: 50 Fishermen's Comment Card

